



**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

# News Release

March 3, 2005

## **OPERATION PREDATOR ARRESTS SURPASS 5,000**

*Washington State accounts for more than 50 arrests in initiative targeting sex predators*

SEATTLE – More than 50 of the 5,000 child sex offenders arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as part of an ongoing international initiative known as Operation Predator have occurred in the state of Washington.

Michael J. Garcia, Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for ICE, announced today that arrests in the 20-month long effort have surpassed 5,000. Among those individuals arrested here are:

- Michael Lewis Clark, arrested in Cambodia on a charge of debauchery involving illicit sexual conduct with two males, ages 10 and 13. Clark, a United States citizen, was the first person prosecuted under the PROTECT ACT. He entered a guilty plea in the Western District of Washington to two counts of traveling in foreign commerce and engaging in illicit sexual conduct with minors. Clark was sentenced to 97 months in federal custody.
- Don Hiebert, arrested by ICE in conjunction with Seattle's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, after admitting to having child pornography on his laptop computer and taking naked photos of his girlfriend's minor son in the bathtub. Hiebert was sentenced to 121 months in federal custody after pleading guilty to sexual exploitation of children, production of visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct, and possession of visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct. He also faces state charges.
- Timothy Oakes was arrested by ICE agents in Spokane acting on information from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Oakes pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Spokane to separate counts of producing and distributing child pornography between May 2003 and March 2004. Oakes, a convicted sex offender from Tennessee, will serve 20 years in federal custody.

Operation Predator is a comprehensive initiative aimed at those who prey on and exploit children, including human traffickers, international sex tourists, Internet pornographers, and foreign national predators whose crimes make them deportable.

“Sexual predators will not go unpunished for their heinous crimes,” said Garcia. “Whether the criminal is a U.S. citizen who thinks they can travel overseas to molest children or a pornographer who trades in images of child sexual abuse, or a foreign national who has lost the privilege to remain in the U.S. because of a crime against a child, ICE will identify, arrest, and, where possible, remove them.”

Operation Predator evolved out of ICE’s mission to find and deport illegal aliens -- particularly those with criminal records, and reflects the agency’s traditional public safety mission. Those arrested fall into four general categories:

**Foreign National Child Predators:** More than 85 percent of the arrests in Operation Predator involve foreign national sex offenders whose crimes make them removable from the United States. To date, more than 2,100 of these predators have been deported.

**International Child Sex Tourists:** Working cooperatively with foreign governments through ICE’s attaché offices worldwide, ICE agents have made 14 arrests, including the first 12 arrests, under the child sex tourism provisions of the PROTECT Act.

**Human Smuggling & Trafficking of Children:** The criminal networks engaged in human smuggling and trafficking have become more violent and more profit-driven than ever before. At the same time, some of their victims are getting younger and younger.

**Internet Child Pornography:** Drawing on ICE’s cyber crime investigative expertise, ICE is tackling the crimes that cross the nation’s virtual borders. One massive investigation has resulted in more than 1,200 arrests worldwide and marks the first time the government has gone after the financial side of child pornography. Moreover, through the National Child Victim Identification System, more than 1,600 pornographic images containing child pornography have been authenticated.

Additional information about Operation Predator is available on the Web at [www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov). ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

**Editor’s Note: B-roll, including video of arrests, an interview with Assistant Secretary Garcia, and graphics will be available via satellite at 12:00 noon PST. The coordinates for the video feed are: GALAXY 3/C-Band Transponder 6, Vertical: 95° West, Downlink frequency: 3820 Mhz.**

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*